THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Question No. 184.

Study regarding Narcotic Trade in the Country

184. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: *Will the Minister of FINANCE be* pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that trade in narcotics continues to thrive unabated in the country which is emerging as a single most important transit point in the global narcotics trade especially in the region of the "Golden Triangle"; and

(b) if so, whether Government have made any critical study of the growing illegal narcotics trade in the country, identifying the rackets involved, their contacts and the extent of connivance of the official machinery at various levels?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) No, Sir. It is not correct to say that India is emerging as the single most important transit point in global narcotics trade especially in the region of the "Golden Triangle". However, India is geographically located between two major opiates producing regions in the world namely Golden Crescent (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran) and Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Laos and Thailand) and is vulnerable to trafficking of drugs originating in these regions.

(b) Government of India has been continuously stepping up its efforts in the fight against narcotics trafficking. Quarterly coordination meetings chaired by Director General, Narcotics Control Bureau are held regularly in New Delhi which are attended by all enforcement agencies involved in drug trafficking at the highest level. Periodic bilateral talks are being held with authorities of Pakistan and Myanmar. Although, there have been unconfirmed stray reports in various newspapers and periodicals about narcotics related corruption in the North-East, but, no specific instance relating to corruption pertaining to narcotics trade from "Golden Triangle" has come to the notice of the Government.

श्री राघवजी: महोदया, मैंने पूछना था।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We cannot take 45 minutes for one question.

श्री राघवजी: मैडम, आपने कहा था, इसलिए कह रहा हूं।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I know I said a lot of things. But the time constraint is also there. If Members start making explanatory statements, ideological statements and Ministers are asked to give replies to them, I don't know how we can discuss other questions.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Madam, the hon. Members are undoubtedly aware of a region called 'the Golden Triangle'. This comprises Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. It is estimated that 60% of the drugs being smuggled into America and Europe are originating from the Golden Triangle. India is the transit point for smuggling narcotics to America and Europe. There is another similar region for drugs which is called 'the Golden Crescent'. It comprises Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Afghanistan has particularly emerged as a major production centre for opium and its derivatives. India, situated between the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent has become very vulnerable to large scale smuggling of heroin and other drugs through this country. I note from the Minister's reply that India has not emerged as the single most important transit point, though my views are different.

Narcotic drugs have been termed as one of the most corrosive threats to the human society. The trade in narcotic drugs has been expanding very fast and, in fact, the turnover of the drugs exceeds the international trade in oil. It has a well organised international network.

All the countries have declared production of and trading in drugs illegal. Some countries have prescribed capital punishment for people indulging in this trade.

My first question is: (a) What steps are the Government of India proposing to take to put a complete stop to trading in narcotics both from the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent? It is my fear that the existing strength of security and vigilance staff deployed by the Government to stop this trade which is being routed through India is not adequate. What are the plans of the Government of India to further strengthen these units? (b) Nepal has an open border with India. What steps do the Government propose to take to stop sale of hashish produced in large quantities in Nepal which is being routed through India? (c) What is the present maximum penalty for people convicted in trading of drugs and as to whether or not the Government proposes to increase this penalty?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Madam, the supplementry is travelling far beyond the question. But I am willing to answer it. The question is : Is India emerging as the single most important transit point, especially in the region of the Golden Triangle? It is true that 60-70% of the heroin that flows into the United States originates from the Golden Triangle. But the transit route of that, according to the international agencies which meet periodically, is not India. What originates from the Golden Triangle goes to the United States *via* Japan and China. What originates in the Golden Crescent, *i.e.*, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, transit through India. Therefore, the answer that I have given is the correct answer. We face a threat, on the basis of evidence available, not from the Golden Triangle but from the Golden Crescent. The Golden Triangle is another transit route and that transits *via* Japan and China to the United States.

Madam, we are not oblivious of the fact that the Golden Triangle could emerge as a threat.

We have taken a number of specific measures regarding the Golden Triangle area. For example, Madam a comprehensive bilateral agreement has been entered into by the Government of India with the Government of Myanmar for reducing demand and preventing illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs. We have provided two drug-sniffer dogs and also trained dog-handlers from the state of Myanmar. Acetic Anhydride and Enantynylic Acid, the precursor chemicals, have been declared as controlled substances. All persons arrested for drug-trafficking are liable for straingent punishment under the NDPS Act. The maximum penalty under the NDPS Act, as you are aware, is death. And most sentences run up to 20 years. In fact, sentences have been handed down for 10 or 12 or even 15 years.

SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Has anybody got the death sentence so far?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I have to find out. I will find out and let you know whether anyone has been given the death sentence. But I know of several cases where sentences of 10 years and 12 years have been handed down.

On the Golden Crescent, we face a major threat. In fact, the bulk of the heroin seized in India comes from the Golden Crescent. In the calender year 1996, 802 kilograms, that is, the bulk of all seizures, came from the Golden Crescent. We have, of course, taken a large number of measures on the Indo-Pak border. The Indo-Pak border has been fenced. A large number of measures have been taken. We are aware that we face the greatest threat from the Golden Crescent.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Madam, my second supplementary is a short one. But before putting that, I would like to say this. What the hon. Minister has said is contrary to my written reply. The reply very clearly says that India is geographically located betwen the

Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle and is vulnerable to trafficking of drug originating in these regions. This is what the reply says. When the hon. Minister says that the Golden Triangle does not affect India it is contrary to what was said in his reply as read out by me.

My second supplementary is a very short one, Madam. Is the Government holding regular high-level discussions and review meetings with the countries of the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent so as to resolve this problem and if so, with what results?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I am sorry I could not get it.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: I will repeat it. Are the Government holding regular high-level discussions and review meetings with the countries of the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent so as to resolve this matter?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: The answer is 'yes'. And the answer to the other hon. Member's question is, in a recent case, the death sentence has been awarded.

डा० (श्रीमती) उर्मिला चिमनभाई पटेल: मैडम, मैं पूछना चाहती हूं कि यह जो नारकोटिक्स ड्रग का ट्रेफिकिंग होता है, इंटरनेशनल एजेंसी इसमें काम कर रही है, क्या इन इंटरनेशनल एजेंसी को कम्बेट करने के लिए इंटरनेशनल इंस्टीटयूशन्स का और दूसरी एजेंसियों का उपयोग करके उसको रोकने के लिए हम कुछ कर रहे हैं? अगर कर रहे हैं तो क्या स्टैप लिए गए हैं और उनका सपोर्ट कैसा रहा है, मैं जानना चाहती हूं?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Madam, India is a very active player in international agencies. In fact, I say, with some sense of pride, that over the years, not only last year, but over the last four or five years, India's role in drug-traffic control has been very widely and warmly applauded in international fora. In fact, the United States publishes a well-known report every year. And India has been certified as one of the countries with the best drug-traffic control enforcement mechanisms. We are members of the international forums. In fact, India has been elected as a rapporteur in one of the fora. We play a very active role. Meetings take place, if I recall, once in about three months to six months. High-level officials visit these countries. In fact, I constantly send a number of officers to update themselves on what is going on in the world in order to update our equipment, our methods of investigation, etc. We are recognised as one of the most active and effective players in the world forum today.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

केन्द्रीय सरकार द्वारा राज्य सरकारों को ऋण प्रदान किया जाना

*181. **श्री दिलीप सिंह जूदेव:** क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) 1 अप्रैल, 1997 की स्थिति के अनुसार केन्द्रीय सरकार द्वारा राज्य सरकारों को राज्य-वार ऋण की कितनी-कितनी राशि प्रदान की गई;

(ख)* वर्ष 1995-96 और 1996-97 के दौरान केन्द्रीय सरकार द्वारा राज्य-वार दी गई ऋण की राशि तथा उन ऋणों की वसूली की मात्रा कितनी है;

(ग) वर्ष 1995-96 और 1996-97 के दौरान केन्द्रीय सरकार द्वारा राज्य सरकारों को उनके द्वारा लिये गये ऋण की राज्य-वार कितनी राशि बट्टे खाते डाली गई एवं इस संबंध में अन्य प्रकार की छूट दी गई, और;

(घ) ऋणों को बट्टे खाते डालने और ऋणों में छूट देने के लिए राज्य सरकारों द्वारा गत दो वर्षों के दौरान किये गये अनुरोधों का ब्यौरा क्या है?